

Missouri Assessment Program
Spring 2001

Communication Arts

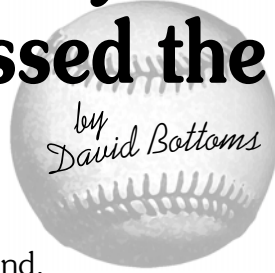
Released Items
Grade 11

Directions

This passage is a poem by David Bottoms. Read the poem. Then answer Numbers 15 through 19.

The bunt: Baseball players are often given a “sign” by their coach, telling them to “sacrifice bunt.” This soft, shallow hit allows a player who is already on base to advance into scoring position, while the batter has to give up the opportunity to get on base. The bunt is a sacrifice made by the batter for the good of the team.

Sign for My Father, Who Stressed the Bunt



On the rough diamond,
the hand-cut field below the dog lot and barn,
we rehearsed the strict technique
of bunting. I watched from the infield,
the mound, the backstop
as your left hand climbed the bat, your legs
and shoulders squared toward the pitcher.
You could drop it like a seed
down either base line. I admired your style,
but not enough to take my eyes off the bank
that served as our center-field fence.

Years passed, three leagues of organized ball,
no few lives. I could homer
into the garden beyond the bank,
into the left-field lot of Carmichael Motors,
and still you stressed the same technique,
the crouch and spring, the lead arm absorbing
just enough impact. That whole tiresome pitch
about basics never changing,
and I never learned what you were laying down.

Like a hand brushed across the bill of a cap,
let this be the sign
I'm getting a grip on the sacrifice.



Imagine that you are the poet writing a short letter to your father. Explain what you have finally understood about your father's lesson on bunting. Use details and/or examples from the poem for support.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

What “sign” does the son want to send to his father? Use details and/or examples from the poem to support your answer.

- 17** The son's approach and his father's approach to hitting are quite different. What do their different approaches show about what is important to each of them? Use details and/or examples from the poem to support your answer.

- 18** The poem is written from the point of view of the son. Would the poem be more effective or less effective if the author had chosen to write the poem from a third-person point of view? Use details and/or examples from the poem to support your answer.
